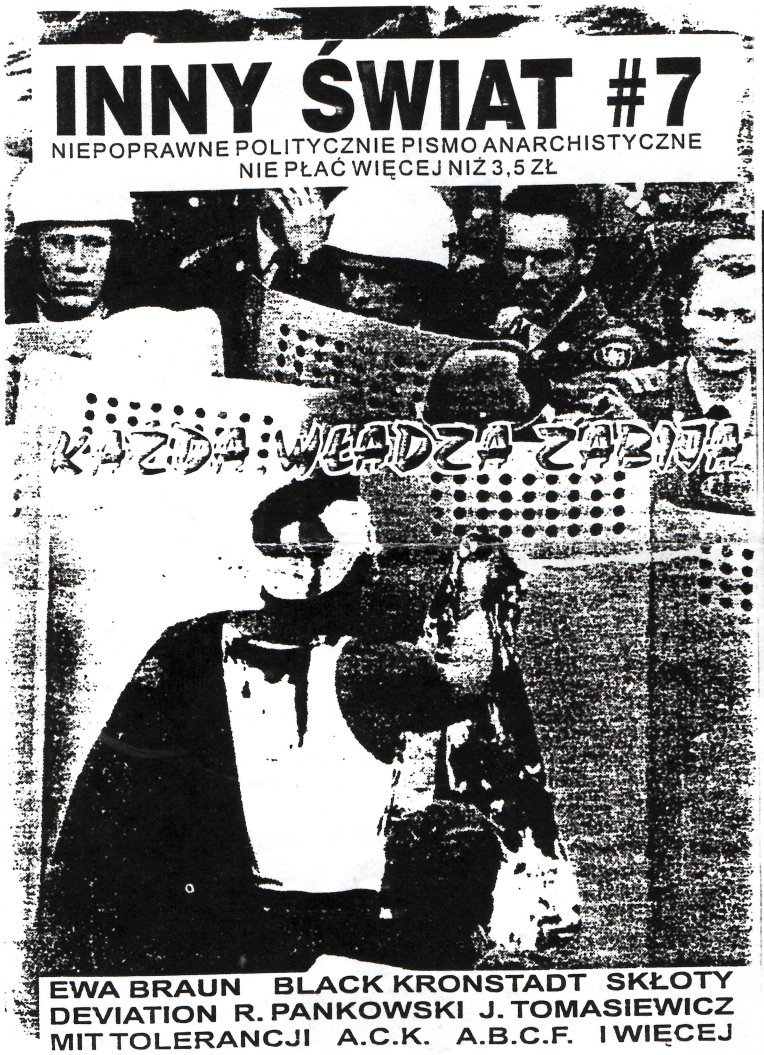
Members of the Polish Anarchist Magazine

INNY SWIAT

Interview members of the

ABCF



ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS FEDERATION

Wywiad z Neilem z Anarchist Black Cross Federation został przeprowadzony korespondencyjnie. Niestety nie wyszedł on tak jak tego oczekiwałem ale mam nadzieję, że i tak jest spoko i będzie można się z niego czegoś dowiedzieć. W wywiadzie pojawia się skrót PP/POW co oznacza więzień polityczny lub wojenny.

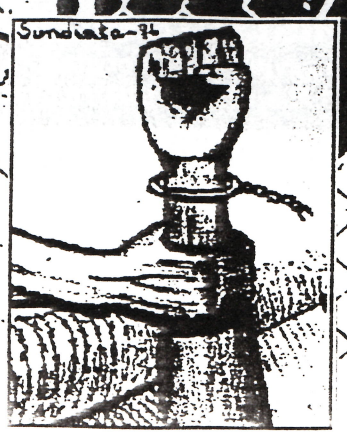
Powiedz czym jest federacja Anarchist Black Cross (ABCF). Dlaczego jesteś w ABCF?

ABCF jest federacją kolektywów Anarchist Black Cross, których celem jest połączyć finansową pomoc i ,podnosić świadomość o PP/POW. Kiedy mówimy o PP/POW, konkretnie chodzi o ludzi, którzy zostali uwięzieni za świadome polityczne działanie.

Na przykład by pomóc PP/POW finansowo, zorganizowaliśmy Warchest Program, zbierający wolne datki od kolektywów ABCF, innych grup ABC ze Stanów nie włączonych do federacj, pomagając jednostkom i grupom o różnych ideologiach. Pytamy PP/POW o ich finansowe wsparcie jakie otrzymują, ci którzy mają najmniejsze dostają miesięczne czeki do 60$. Zaczęliśmy ten program w listopadzie 1994. Aktualnie wysyłamy miesięczne czeki siedmiu PP/POW. Jest jeszcze „Fundacja Nagłych Wypadków" wysyłająca ludziom, którz nie potrzebują miesięcznych czeków, coś czego nagle im brakuje n.p.więzień polityczny Jalil Muntaqim był przewożony w środku zimy z jednego więzienia do drugiego, stracił swój płaszcz i rękawiczki, Fundacja pomogła mu kupując te rzeczy. Jaan Laaman odstraszano od podjęcia nauki w więzieniu bo nie miała pieniędzy, Fundacja znalazła dla niej te pieniądze. W styczniu kolektyw ABCF z Jacksonville FL najechała policja, zamykając działaczy, Fundacja wyciągnęła ich za kaucją itd..

ABCF także zwiększa informacje o PP/POW poprzez udzielanie wywiadów do pism jak to na przykład (szukaj wywiadu z ABCF w zimowym numerze Maximum Rock-n-Roll). Robimy polityczny towar o PP/POW- koszulki, broszury, kalendarze, wywiady z więźniami na taśmach i wiele innych rzeczy. Nie robimy tego tylko po to by to sprzedać i mieć dla nich fundusze, ale również by uczyć ludzi o życiu PP/POW w Stanach i o zmaganiach jakie przechodzą próbując odnowić rewolucyjną działalność tutaj, zanikającą w ostatnich latach.

Powodem dla którego to robimy może wyrazić zdanie Więźnia wojennego (POW) -"Każdy ruch nie pomagający swoim poltycznym internowanym jest fałszywy". Udana rewolucja musi posiadać struktury utrzymujące znaczenie komunikacji z uwięzionymi. Między i wewnątrz ruchu w Stanach są nie tylko przyszli leaderzy i budowniczy nadchodzącego socjalnego kryzysu ale także przyszli więźniowie zmagań. Ta rzeczywistość musi być wzięta pod uwagę jeśli mówimy poważnie o rewolucji w U.S.A i gdziekolwiek indziej.



2) Czy jest duże wsparcie dla idei ABC, bądź pomagania więźniom w Stanach ?

- Współczesne polityczne tendencje między rewolucyjną lewicą w tym kraju, ponownie dostrzegły potrzebę pomocy PP/POW. ABCF dostarcza pewnej pomocy i jest na pierwszej linji tego rosnącego trędu.

Neil wraz z Carmen Valentin-portor rykański więzień wojenny.

3) Jakiego rodzaju więźniom pomaga ABCF. Czy tylko anarchistom ?

-PP/POW w Stanach są unikatowi w okazywaniu dużej jedności między sobą, która góruje nad różnymi ideologiami. Według ich przykładu ABCF tworzy się tak samo, nie sekciarsko, dostępnie. Niewielu PP/POW jest anarchistami, większość nie jest.

ABCF

OD LEWEJ STOJĄ: MATT (NJ ABC), IVAN, ROB (JACKSONVILLE ABC), CHUCK D. z PUBLIC ENEMY, HENRY i NEIL (NJ ABC).

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation

4) Mieliście w działalności ABCF problemy z policją albo FBI ?

Współcześnie ABC z New Jersey nie doświadczała jawnych prowokacji. Policja i FBI zwykle używa przykrywek, albo tajnych operacji by niszczyć organizacje.

Mimo tego w styczniu 1996 grupę ABC z Jacksonville najechały poważnie uzbrojone oddziały SWAT (specjalna broń i taktyka) z policją. Jeden z członków został wzięty do aresztu, natomiast SWAT przesłuchiwali pozostałych, przeszukiwali ich domy abstrachując już od konfiskacji politycznej literatury legalnej broni i paru innych rzeczy. Po zwolnieniu policja i oddziały SWAT wróciły za dwa tygodnie, aresztowali wszystkich z wyjątkiem jednej osoby. Musieli czekać cztery dni aż ich rodziny pomogły im wyjść za kaucją. Właśnie trwa proces, grozi im do pięciu lat więzienia.

Od lewej:Sundiata Acoli(New African P.O.W.).Donnie(Sundiata Acoli Freedom Campaing).Neil(NJ ABC).

Od lewej:Matt(NJ ABC).Sekou Odinga (New African P.O.W.).Neil(NJ ABC).

5) Czy współpracujecie z podobnymi organizacjami. Co myślisz o współpracy z organizacjami rewolucyjnej lawicy ?

- Aktualnie nie współpracujemy z żadną organigacją, ale nie jesteśmy przeciw współpracy kiedy cel jest podobny.

Free All Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War

5) Czy mieliście problemy w odwiedzaniu więźniów lub korespondowaniu z nimi ?

- Rzadko. Odwiedzanie jest ważną częścią pomocy jaką prowadzi ABCF, myślę że nie było specjalnych problemów, owszem czasem jesteśmy zmuszani do czekania kilka godzin przed wizytą, czasem odwiedziny są skracane itd. Niedawno członek ABC z New Jersey odwiedzał POW w Kaliforni, nagle po wizycie odwołano wszystkie wcześniej ustalone wizyty w więzieniu. Nie możemy stwierdzić na pewno czy było tylko zbieg okoliczności, czy jakaś przemyślana akcja. Zdarza się że nie dociera nasza poczta, bądź wiemy że ktoryś z PP/POW coś nam wysłał a tego nie dostajemy, ale nie jest to regularne. Nasze pismo opisujące postęp i pracę ABCF, w paru więzieniach sklasyfikowano jako „nieautoryzowane"

7) Powiedz jak my w Polsce możemy pomóc ABCF. Co byś poradził młodemu polskiemu ABC ?

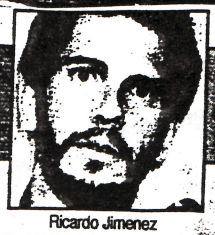
- Realia obecnej sytuacji na świecie pokazują że budowanie ruchu rewolucyjnego musi mieć charakter ponad narodowy. Najlepszym sposobem pokazania solidarności jest publikacja ciężkich realiów PP/POW ze Stanów i ich walki, my powinniśmy w Ameryce przybliżać walkę z poza naszych granic. Musimy też utrzymywać stały kontakt, uczyć się jedni od drugich, asystować we wzajemnej pomocy. Dziękuję za możliwość przekazania naszych uczuć i pracy

Na zawsze w walce

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation

Checks to CASH only:
NJ ABC- BG
P.O. Box 8532
Paterson, NJ 07508-8532
Contact # 201-357-0994

"Support Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War"



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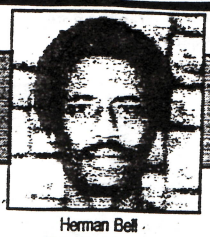

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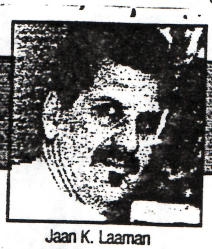

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English translation of Inny Swiat Polish interview

1) Tell us what the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) is. Why are you in the ABCF?

The ABCF is a federation of Anarchist Black Cross collectives whose purpose is to focus on financially supporting, and raising awareness about Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POW) in the United States. When we talk about PP/POW's we are talking specifically of people who have been imprisoned for conscious political actions taken in political movements outside of prison.

To support PP/POW's financially, for example, we have organized the Warchest Program. The Warchest Program collects donations from ABCF collectives, other ABC groups in the US not involved in the ABCF, supportive individuals and groups of many political ideologies, and pools these funds. We then ask many PP/POW's about the financial support they receive. In the order of need, those PP/POW's who receive the least financial support will then receive a monthly check of up to $60. We initiated this program in November 1994 and it has remained consistent since then. We currently support 7 PP/POW's with monthly checks. There is also the Emergency Fund which sends money to PP/POW's who may not need monthly funds, but need one time financial support for a specific reason. For example, a Black Liberation Army PP, Jalil Muntaqim was transferred from one prison to another in the middle of winter and lost his coat and gloves. The Emergency Fund was able to help purchase these items for him. Anti Imperialist PP Jaan Laaman was kept from taking college courses in prison due to lack of money, the Emergency Fund was able to help pay for his classes. In January 1996, an ABCF collective in Jacksonville FL, was raided by the police and put in prison for their political work in the community, the Emergency Fund helped bail them out etc.

The ABCF also raises awareness for PP/POW's by doing interviews in magazines like this one, (look for an interview with the ABCF in an upcoming winter issue of Maximum Rock-n-Roll). We also produce political merchandise about PP/POW's like T-shirts, pamphlets, calendars featuring them, taped interviews with them and much more. We do this not only to sell it and raise funds for them, but to educate people about the existence of PP/POW's in the US, and the struggles that they came from to try and revitalize revolutionary activity in the US, which has been in decline in the last several years.

The reason we do this work can be summed up in a quote by Ojore Lutalo, an anarchist POW. As he states; "Any movement that fails to support its political internees is a sham movement." Any successful revolution must have a structure which supports and maintains meaningful communication with its political captives and exiles. Among and within the movement that exists in the US today, there are not only the future leaders and builders of the coming social crisis, but also the future captives of the struggle. And this reality must be taken into account if we are serious about building revolution in the US and elsewhere.

2) Is there much support for the ABC idea, or helping prisoners in the United States of America.

Recent political trends among the revolutionary left in this country have seen a resurgence in interest of supporting PP/POW's. ABCF has provided consistent support and has been on the front line of this growing trend.

3) What kind of prisoners help the ABCF? Are they only anarchist?

PP/POW's in the US, as far as we see, are unique in that they display a high level of unity among themselves which transcends their various ideologies and sects they subscribe to. Based on their example, the ABCF organizes in the same non-sectarian, non-partisan approach. Due to this and the reality that there aren't many anarchist PP/POW's the majority of PP/POW's involved in the organization are not anarchist.

4) In your work with the ABCF, have you had any problems with the cops or FBI?

In the earlier stages of forming NJ ABC (an ABCF group in New Jersey), police have raided our office, arrested us and shot at our bookstore/community center. At one demonstration in support of prisoners accused of leading a prison rebellion, the FBI detained us in the basement of a courtroom. In recent times, NJ ABC has not experienced overt police provocations. Keeping in mind that in the US, the police and FBI, etc. usually use covert and secret operations to harass and destroy organizations.

However, in January 1996, Jacksonville ABC (an ABCF group in Florida) were raided by highly armed SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams and police. One member was taken into custody and detained on a minor auto violation, while SWAT and evidence technicians interrogated the remaining collective members and tore their home apart confiscating political literature, legal shotguns, and more. After the member was released, police and SWAT teams returned less than two weeks later to arrest all but one of the Jacksonville ABC members. In this instance all were detained in prison for 4 days until the ABCF and family members were able to bail them out. Currently they remain out on bail and their trial is ongoing. They face up to 5 years in prison.

5) Have you had problems meeting with prisoners, or corresponding with them?

Not usually. An important service the ABCF provides is visiting PP/POW's. Different members of the federation visit PP/POW's on a consistent basis. Though there has been nothing serious, we occasionally are made to wait for hours before visits, sometimes our visits are cut short etc. Recently, members of NJ ABC visited a POW in California. Immediately after our visit, the prison revoked all the prisoners approved visitors. We can not say for sure if this was a coincidence or covert harassment. We also occasionally lose mail to and from PP/POW's, but it does not happen on a regular basis. The ABCF Update, a magazine that reports our progress and upcoming work has been classified as "unauthorized" in some prisons.

6) Is the ABCF in collaboration with other similar organizations? What do you think about collaboration with other revolutionary left organizations?

Currently there is no specific organization we are presently collaborating with. However we are not opposed to working together with other revolutionary organizations to attain similar goals.

8) Tell me how we in Poland can help ABCF? What advice do you have for a young Polish ABC?

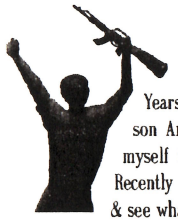
The reality of the present situation in the world shows that the building of a revolutionary movement must be international in both its vision and practice. In the current stage of struggle we are in, the best way to show solidarity is for people in Poland to publicize the plight and reality of United States PP/POW's and their struggles, and for us in America to do the same with struggles from outside our borders. We must also keep an open line of communication and dialogue to learn from one another and assist one another in the practice of mutual aid.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts and work.

Forever In Struggle,

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation

INTERVIEW WITH A PAC & ABCF MEMBER



Years ago I remeber hearing of the mighty NJ Paterson Anarchist Collective (PAC), an inspiration to myself in active anarchist organizing & sincerity. Recently I found an old NJAF flier & decided to write & see what was up. The following interview was done with Neil of PAC & NJ ABC- BG of the ABCF:

Give a brief history of the PAC to date:

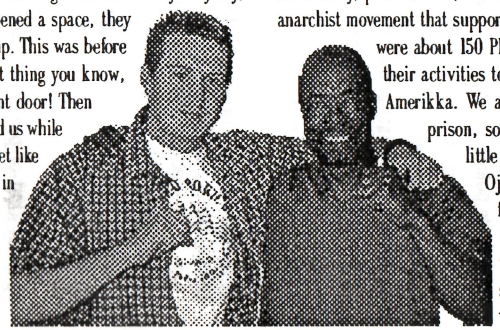
- Neil- PAC started in late 1991. It began as an extension of an anarchist punk band three of collective members were in. The name of the band was W@R. After a band & collective member was beaten by the police, we began to do work to organize against police brutality. We put out a call to local & other NJ groups willing to work on this issue.

What was the N.J.A.F.?

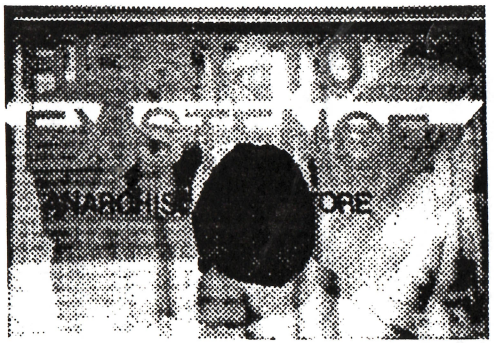
- That is when the North Jersey Anarchist Federation (NJAF) began. The NJAF consisted of several anarchist collectives in NJ like the Ringwood Anarchists, The Anarchist League, North Jersey AYF, PAC, & some others. Early activities of the NJAF were putting out a newspaper about local police abuse called Copwatch, & a monthly newsheet called Jersey Anarchist (which is still put out by PAC/NJ ABC). The problem was that all of these groups had a really wide difference in our focuses & priorities. We all were friends & still are, but each collective wanted to do different things so it was difficult to be able to help each other out in any consistent way. So after a couple years, the federation lost any reason for existing & broke down because there was no real strong issues that held us together, as is needed to have a real federation. Several of the groups formerly in the NJAF are still out there organizing like the Anarchist League who do a lot of pacifist & Anti War tax organizing & the Ringwood Anarchists who do Sewered Lips recording label, NJAYF who print a big fanzine called Misfit Society & of course PAC & NJ ABC. Honestly, though there is no more NJAF or "federation", there is still an unofficial "network" of NJ anarchists, because all of us have maintained contact & supported each other throughout all these years when we could.

What is Right To Existence?

After the release & local support of Copwatch, police in the area began to really harass us on a more consistent basis. Soon afterwards we opened Right To Existence, our local book shop. The name Right To Existence comes from an old clandestine anarchist organization in Paterson. It was the same organization Luigi Gaetano was from. He was the anarchist who went to assassinate King Umbarto in Italy. Anyway, when the police discovered we opened a space, they immediately raided it, tearing it up. This was before it even opened to the public. Next thing you know, the cops start shooting at the front door! Then they smashed the windows, arrested us while just sitting outside, crazy harassmnet like this. We began to print a more in depth newspaper called Plain Words, in which Copwatch was a section. The name Plain Words came from an action anarchists all over the country participated in, including those in Paterson, NJ.



Neil of NJ ABC & BLA POW Sundiata Acoli



Cops broke the windows of Right To Existence

On this event, anarchists all over the country planted bombs on the doorsteps of industrial owners & the ruling class. All these bombs went off within an hour of each other, & at each of the sites a pink flier was left proclaiming war of the oppressed onto their oppressors. The title of the flier was Plain Words.

Explain the NJ ABC, what are its priorities & projects?

- All this happened from late 1991 to about late 1992, early 1993. From this we had received some local & radical press coverage that was read by a few Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War (PP/POW). Anarchist POW Ojore Lutalo who is in Trenton, NJ heard about us & then read about the shooting at Right To Existence & we began writing. Ohio 7 PP Ray Luc Levasseur read about the shooting in an issue of the Industrial Worker & wrote us to tell us he had been through similar situations while on the street, then Black Liberation Army POW Sundiata Acoli wrote to help us with the printing of Plain Words. They shared a lot of information with us & from this info. & back & forth, our vision really began to broaden. We began to discover that the local work we were a part of was just a part of a much larger fight for liberation of all oppressed people, that we were not alone, or isolated like we sometimes felt. From our contact with these PP/POW's we learned a lot more about the last generations of people who struggled, & how the government killed them, destroyed their groups & put them in prison for years & years. Most of them are still in jail, these are Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War (PP/POW's.) This is when members of PAC started NJ Anarchist Black Cross (NJ ABC). Historically, prior to 1917, the ABC has always been the arm of the anarchist movement that supported PP/POW's. We learned that there were about 150 PP/POW's in the US, put in prison for their activities to build a revolutionary movement in Amerikka. We also learned that they have been in prison, some of them for 26 years now, with little or no support. We realized that, as Ojore Lutalo says, "Any movement that fails to support its political internees (PP/POW's) is a sham movement!" So we decided that the focus of NJ ABC should be support & defense of class war prisoners, or PP/POW's. Currently NJ ABC is a part of an ABC Federation (ABCF) that operates several project in support of these goals. The most visible & successful of these is the Warchest Program. The Warchest is available to all US PP/POW's & sends monthly checks to those who receive the least financial aid. We do this by collecting monthly & one time donations from supportive groups & individuals, pooling these funds & distributing them among prisoners who we have researched as being in the most financial need to our knowledge. There is a Prisoners Committee (PC) that is a voting body of the ABCF. It consists of 5 PP/POW's who serve year terms & are then replaced by a new committee. They help in determining who receives funding when it becomes available, actually, they vote on all matters that require voting in the ABCF. We urge people who think this is a solid idea to contribute anything they can, even just $5 or $10 a month helps a lot & the PP/POW's need it badly. We print a financial repot bimonthly & if you contribute, we'll send you this report that documents your contribution & shows you to which prisoner it went, the prisoners addresses are printed so people can write them & hold us accountable to our claims.

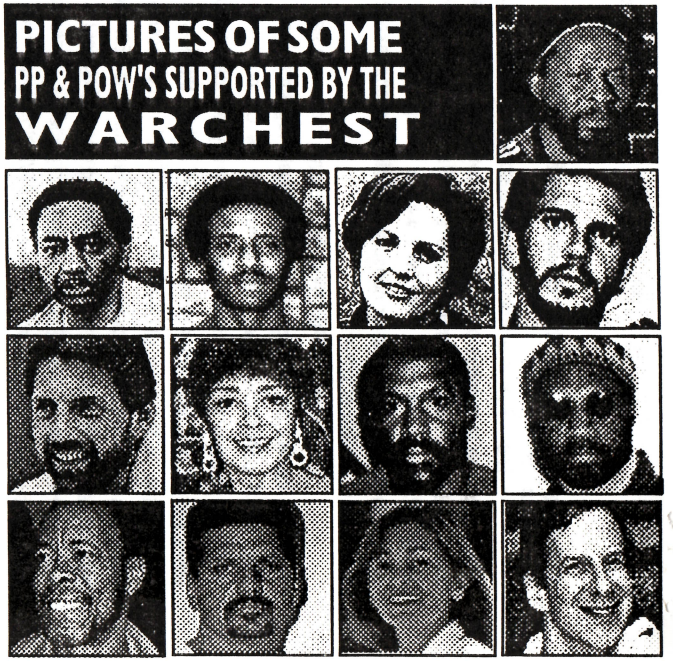
Didn't NJ ABC have a problem with the ABCF?

- No. There was a problem in the ABCF back in October '95, but in our opinion it was resolved in the correct manner. Really, the same thing happened with the ABCF, as happened to the NJAF, except there were enough people interested in the same thing to maintain a federation, the one we remain a part of now. How it started was several ABC groups in the same region began working together in mid '94. By early '95, people were taking a bigger interest in what was going on & NJ ABC drafted a proposal to build a national federation of ABC's to better organize the work. We felt this would enable us to grow with the best results. The first thing you need to build a federation is a common goal all people could agree on. We suggested support & defense of class war prisoners (PP/POW's), historically, that was what the ABC was for anyway. Mostly what we were & are about is trying to really get together & support what we all agree on, & not highlight or support our differences. So at a meeting in May, '95 that was called by the regional groups, the participants looked at the proposal & accepted it. Groups in the ABCF had different opinions on some different issues, but at the time we didn't impose them on each other or anything. If one group believed in prison abolition, they organized around it as much as they like autonomously. But it wasn't something the whole ABCF agreed on, so collectively it wasn't what we focused on. Several months later half of the groups involved felt like they wanted to change the vision of the ABCF & these changes included several issues like this the other half disagreed on. What happened then was the two halves decided to split & work on the issues they felt were most important to them. The ABCF continues to grow & work on what we all agree on, the support & defense of PP/POW's.

Being active yourself in collective actions/activity & within an @ federation, what criticisms, if any do you have towards anarchist organizing? What advice would you give to others attempting to organize collectively?

- Only what our brief history & the history of all struggle shows generally. We need to define our own politics as best we can, & without compromising our own politics, try to unite with as many people possible to move forward. At such a low period of struggle right now, we wont often be able to do earth shaking things, however everything we do now must be done solidly & thoroughly, because we are building the foundation that earth shaking event will happen. That foundation must be strong, or it will crumble & set all our efforts back. There are lots of definable things in society that we can fight against like racism, sexism, homophobia, colonialism & many others. What we need to define is what we are fighting FOR. Build a vision, a goal & define the things that are in the way of that goal. Persistent struggle to overcome these obstacles is what brings us to victory. If we never give up & stick to our politics we will never stop moving forward.

Last comments?

- Only that it is good to hear from you again & to thank you for trying to set up the show for W@R that time in Baltimore. sorry we couldn't make it. Anyone interested in supporting the Warchest Program, getting a catalog of pamphlets, calendars, videos/audio tapes, shirts & other stuff the ABCF produces, or anything should write to:

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